

PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

I AM not a regular reader of "Pravda," but I learn from a friend more studious than myself that in recent weeks its columns had afforded more than one indication that all was not well with Mr. Malenkov.

His last appearance (prior, that is to say, to his resignation) was on January 26, when his telegram of congratulations to Mr. Nehru on the fifth anniversary of the proclamation of the Indian Republic was presented in the style reserved for official proclamations.

Between January 25 and 31 the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party held the meetings at which Mr. Malenkov's fate must be presumed to have been decided. There was no mention of him, either then or afterwards, in connection with these meetings; and on February 2 and 3 it was to Mr. Khrushchev's speech that "Pravda" directed all its attention.

New Light on Hamlet

NOW thoroughly bitten with the idea of the newspaper as a weather-gauge, I sent for the reviews of "Hamlet," which is now being given in Moscow after a lapse of twenty years. There, too, I might find some reflection of current commotions; perhaps Fortinbras would be exalted as the spokesman of an omni-competent military caste?

"Shakespeare's finest tragedy, so long falsified by bourgeois art," I read, "is being given at the Mayakovskiy Theatre. The new production shows Hamlet in the centre of the struggle for world culture. An essential link in this great struggle, he once again confirms the indispensable truth that only a forward, progressive ideology can preserve and multiply the spiritual values of popular genius."

Though balked of any evident relevance to last week's strange events, I could not help remembering that forty-five years ago Moscow staged a greater "Hamlet"—produced by Stanislavsky and Gordon Craig—and that half the artistic world came freely to see it. It has not been mentioned in this year's reviews.

A Fortunate Man

IN Europe, the senior museum official tends to be a natural conservative with a life appointment and a diminutive budget.

Very different is Mr. Alan Jarvis, who has just been appointed Director of the National Gallery in Ottawa. Mr. Jarvis is only thirty-nine; but he has been, among other things, a film producer, a social worker, a Penguin editor, a leading member of the Council for Industrial Design, and personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps at the end of the war. As a sculptor, he can command a minimum of 200 guineas for a bust; and now, as the holder of one of the most coveted posts in the world of art, he has insisted that the appointment should, in the first place, be for five years only.

The Canadian National Gallery

does not lead the beggarly life of its European counterparts. Last year there was a special purchase grant of more than £300,000. A new building is about to be built at a cost of over £2 million. And with these there goes a scheme of popular education as broad as the continent itself. In matters of educational technique, the new Director is a man of 1955; but in the objects of that technique he goes back to Matthew Arnold. "People really do love the best when they see it," he assured me. "Why, Whitehead's 'Adventures of Ideas' has sold 175,000 copies in paper-backs in America. It's a great mistake to underrate public taste."

With the resources of an expand-

able barge. "The raft was thronged," Sir Max tells us, "with Old Judasians — mostly clergymen — who were shouting hearty hortations...."

It is a delectable scene; and I am glad to think that, when the barges themselves no longer ornament the Isis, Mr. Lancaster's remembrance of them will be there to baffle and amuse the oarsmen of the future.

For 15s. read 6d.

I SHOULD have supposed the phrase "pedigree booksellers" to apply to such persons as Mr. Maggs, Mr. Dudley Massey, Mr. Heywood Hill, Mr. Zwemmer, and Mr. Godwin of Better Books, each of whom is, in one way or another, a bookseller of great distinction.

But in point of fact the phrase denotes any bookseller whose shop

sells nothing but books. Both pedigree and non-pedigree booksellers are to take part in the first English experiment in a practice long commonplace in Scandinavia, for instance, and in Australia: the National Book Sale.

For ten days from next Wednesday, 744 booksellers are to mark down by not less than two-thirds of the net price such books as they have had in stock for more than a year and do not expect to sell at the full price. Publishers, too, are to offer quantities of their own surplus stock at half, or less than half, of the published price.

It has, I believe, taken nineteen years for the champions of this clearing-device to sell the idea to their colleagues. I hope that the public will be more quickly persuaded.

Zuleika Takes Tea

IT fell to Cambridge, last autumn, to be the first to put Zuleika Dobson on the stage; but Oxford has lost no time in producing its counter-homage. Next week Mr. Osbert Lancaster's twelve large illustrations to Sir Max Beerbohm's famous fantasy will be put on view in the ballroom of the Randolph Hotel, Oxford, for which they were designed.

What Sir Max himself described as "that very imaginative and sporting proposal" has been amply justified by the wit, skill and variety of Mr. Lancaster's paintings. That he should admirably paraphrase the irony and gentle absurdity of Sir Max's character-building was only to be expected; nor need we be surprised at the architectural perfection of the re-created scene. Zuleika herself is another matter: outraged cries of "Is this the face . . . ?" might have been expected from many a lifelong admirer of the original. Moreover, Sir Max has himself drawn at least one sketch of her. It is therefore Mr. Lancaster's greatest triumph that, to some extent, at any rate, his Zuleika is Zuleika: no more appropriate face and form could be devised.

Judasians Afloat

THE subject which I reproduce here is drawn from chapter viii of Sir Max's book. Zuleika and the Duke of Dorset are taking tea together on the Judas College

I HEAR from Brisbane that Sir Donald Bradman believes that only slow and careful preparation can equip Australia to build a team capable of recovering the Ashes.

Sir Donald has lately tended, on medical advice, to retire more and more to the privacy of his two-storeyed home at Kensington, Adelaide. His sixteen-year-old son is no mean athlete and may often be seen, bat in hand, in the garden with his father. Indeed, hardly a day passes without Sir Donald encouraging his son to lash out at the bowling.

I don't like the sound of that at all.



Zuleika Takes Tea: by Mr. Osbert Lancaster

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Someone to Beware of

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